

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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### DUTCH DUCK PLAGUE DISCOVERED IN BLACK DUCK AT PATUXENT

The contagious "Dutch duck plague" caused the recent death of a black duck at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md., the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife announced today. Federal scientists emphasized, however, that the disease is not a danger to human health.

This is the first time the disease, duck virus enteritis, has been found in the United States outside New York State. It was first discovered in this country in domestic flocks on Long Island in January 1967. The disease has been known in Europe and the Far East for many years.

In November, deaths of 65 wild ducks near Riverhead, Long Island, were attributed to the disease.

"We are hoping this black duck is an isolated case, but we are taking blood samples of about 200 other ducks at Patuxent to determine if they have the disease," Sport Fisheries and Wildlife Director John S. Gottschalk said. The samples will be sent to the Agriculture Department's Plum Island, N.Y., Research Laboratory, which confirmed the enteritis in the Patuxent victim.

"An experimental vaccine is currently being tested at Plum Island," Dr. Gottschalk said. "We will do everything we can to prevent the spread of this disease."

Mallards, swans, and Canada geese are also susceptible to the plague. "The control problem will be more difficult if sea gulls, cormorants and other shore birds prove to be carriers." Dr. Gottschalk said.